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LETTERS OF A CONSERVATIVE.



THE LETTERS
OF
A CONSERVATIVE:

IN WHICH ARE SHOWN

THE ONLY MEANS OF SAVING WHAT IS LEFT

OF THE

ENGLISH CHURCH.

ADDRESS TO LORD MELBOURNE.

BY

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

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L E T T E R S.

LETTER I.

MY LORD,

I never should have written to your Lordship this letter or any other, were I not confident that it is your fixt determination to abolish all the remaining grievances of the United Kingdom. Already have you and your colleagues very much reduced them both in number and intensity. The most prominent have but few and feeble supports. Some of these, however, are in their nature so cumbersome, that, if they are left to be thrown down by the people, it is impossible to calculate how far the ruin may extend.

It is known to many distinguished men, literary and political, of both parties, that I have long been occupied in writing a work, which I thought to entitle *The Letters of a Conservative*. In these I attempted to trace and to expose the faults and fallacies of every administration, from the beginning of the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. I was born at the opening of that year; and many have been my opportunities of conversing, at home and abroad, with those who partook in the events that followed it. On looking over the large quantity of materials I had collected, and of the papers I had composed out of them, I found, among the latest, no mild reprehension of some living statesmen. This followed as the corollary of their recorded words and actions. But the mischief they did is now in part removed, though not by them nor indeed with their consent; and the exposure of it could only serve for the indulgence of ill-humour and the excitement of malignity. This alone would have

been a sufficient reason with me for suppressing my manuscript. There was one yet stronger. Among the ministers whose speeches and plans appeared to me detrimental to the interests of the nation, some had been benevolent to modest worth, and others friendly to useful literature. I would do nothing to grieve the patronized or to offend the patron, when the good was yet active and when the evil had ceased. I threw these papers into the fire; no record of them is existing. But the second part, which I scarcely had begun, must be continued. This relates to the abuses of the Church Establishment, such as, unless they are totally done away with, will involve our country *for the third time* in all the miseries of popular discord, and in all the immoralities of arbitrary spoliation. With permission, I shall continue my remarks in the form of Letters, that a small portion may be taken up and examined at a time.

LETTER II.

It is usual for those who write or speak on politics to declare that they are impartial: I know not whether I am; I only know that I would wish to be. Certainly I have no interest in throwing things into confusion, as all are accused of doing who would correct what they can clearly prove to be abuses. I am too old to benefit personally by any changes, even for the better: I have always avoided the society of the powerful, and hope never to see the face or hear the voice of a prime minister, lest I should lose my own calm on the borders of an abyss where there is none. I never had a quarrel or disagreement with any clergyman on any occasion. I owe my education, such as it is, to virtuous men of that profession. Two of them are dead, whom I remember with love and reverence; the gentle and saintly Benwell, my private tutor at Oxford, and the good old fatherly

Langley, who received me previously. The patient instructor and the gentlemanly scholar, Doctor Sleath of Saint Paul's, will accept the gratitude, while he discountenances the politicks, of his unruly pupil at Rugby.

The spirit of those pious men, who composed the ordinances of the Church of England, was so conciliating, that any one surely would wish it to continue and prevail. And certain I am that such would have been the case, if the power of the higher clergy had not engendered arrogance, and their riches an indifference to their duties. It would be unfair and false to assert that all of them are under this predicament: nor were all when the church was catholick; nor is there any reason to believe that the number of those who abused their trust was greater then. Enormous wealth, both then and now, was granted to clergymen for inadequate services. This was the complaint: this is the complaint: this must cease to be the complaint. The nation will not wait until those who

are the devourers are devoured: but will reduce them instantly to some parity with the other high orders in the state. A prelate must no longer be estimated at thirty admirals; a greater number than ever were in commission at once during the most prosperous of our wars.

LETTER III.

Whatever I possess in the world arises from landed property, and that entailed. My prejudices and interests might therefor be supposed to lean, however softly, on the side of Aristocracy. I had three church-livings in my gift, one very considerable, (about a thousand a-year,) two smaller, which are still in my gift. It may therefor be conceived that I am not quite indifferent to what may befall the Church. These things it is requisite to mention, now I deem it proper to appear not generically as a Conservative, but personally.

We hear of systems *working well*: but we can only judge of English Episcopacy working well by what we have seen her wear out. She has worn out her church upon both feet; upon Ireland and Wales. If we wish to prevent her from doing herself any farther mischief, than habitual sloth, plethory, and passion, have been accumulating within her; if we wish to withhold her from the scorn, contumely, and blows of the people, we must confine her strictly at home, feed her more sparingly, mix a little water in her goblet, and keep a vigilant eye over her, that she be liable, in her enfeebled and unwieldy condition, to no worse and more phagendemick distemper, from the ardour of her profligate lovers.

LETTER IV.

My resolution was taken to collect, to continue, to revise, and to publish, these observations, when

I saw the Second Report of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for the Reform of the Church. Nothing more illusory, or more impudent, was ever laid before Parliament.

Is it possible that the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London can recommend so trifling a defalcation of their revenues, as *two thousand* pounds from *seventeen* thousand in the one case, and from *twelve thousand two hundred* in the other . . . even supposing that, by contingencies, their benefices never rise higher? Is the Archbishop unaware that Drake, Blake, Marlborough, Wolfe, Nelson, Wellington, all united, did not share among them in the course of their victories, victories that saved their country and many others from slavery and ruin, two-thirds of this stipend? Is the archbishop ignorant that the Pope himself, whose power rests upon splendour, cannot command for private purposes fifteen thousand pounds a-year? Will the people of England see with calmness, with forbearance, with endu-

rance, this sacrilegious rapacity? Is there no danger that they may break the claw they cannot pare, and suffocate the maw they cannot satisfy? And we are told, forsooth, that the dignitaries of the Church are ready to make sacrifices! This is the language; yes, to make sacrifices! Gold then is the sacred thing! And what are they ready to give up? That only which they never can spend decorously, and which was entrusted to them as administrators, not as owners. Even of this, how small is the portion they are willing to surrender! There are portions of the British empire, where *three hundred clergymen*, professing, and indefatigably teaching, the same faith as the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of London, do not share among them, with equal abilities, equal virtues, so large a sum of money as these two prelates.

LETTER V.

Does any one believe that all the English and Irish and Welsh bishops, in a body, have more christianity, more wisdom, more knowledge of theology, more eloquence to enforce it, than Robert Hall? It was his opinion, it was also Milton's, (and other men equally wise and pious have assented to it,) that the union of Church and State is injurious, not only to civil liberty but to pure religion. Men varying far asunder in theological creeds, have agreed in this; and have shrunk with horror from that pride, wealth, and stateliness, in the ministers of Christ, which he himself was the first to prohibit and condemn.

I am writing now within sight of the city in which Robert Hall was preacher; and a newspaper is lying on my table recommending to our charity the Irish clergy of the English establishment. Hall and Milton were much nearer to starvation

than Irish parsons are : and one of them was kept from starving, not by tithes, although a clergyman, but by the voluntary contributions of those whom he instructed. When the Irish parsons (sent over from England) are as diligent in their duties as Robert Hall, Ireland is not the country for their starvation. But they must occupy less of their leisure in casting bullets for the murder of their parishioners ; they must consign the musket, the bayonet, the pistol, the cutlass, to unconsecrated hands ; and even the bravest, the proudest and most ambitious of them, must be contented with as little pay and as little fighting as rear-admirals.

To-day it may seem strange to reduce the expenditure of our *reformed* church, to the same economy and frugality as we find established in the *unreformed*. But, by looking at an object long and stedfastly, we perceive it after a time more clearly and distinctly, although the organ of vision has undergone no change. I remember when, from the Edinburgh Observatory, Words-

worth and Southey could be discovered in no poetical constellation: and the little man of the Almanack never suspected that the nebulous obstruction was nearer to the gazer than to the luminary. He has now wiped his glass; not to see with it, but to put it in his pocket: meanwhile he acknowledges that there is something of a twinkling in those regions.

To return to the question of reducing the ecclesiastical salaries.

It is but fair to record the strongest arguments and most impressive appeal on the other side: and this I shall attempt to do, by recollecting the words as they were spoken.

A lady in the country was turning over the dried roses in her dragon jar, when her own maid entered the room, with a salt-cellar in one hand and a teacupful of cloves in the other, to ensure the preservation of the floral mummy. This dialogue ensued.

“ Well, ma’am! true enough it is, that my lord

bishop is to be put upon board-wages. He will have in future but a hundred pounds a-month, which, God knows, is only twenty-five a week. There are some of their own cloth (shame upon 'em!) who have no bowels for the bishops. One, and he was old enough to know better, said on the occasion,

“ Seven years hence it will appear far stranger, that a reduction to such a sum should have been considered as a hardship, when my lords tell us that the clergy in Ireland are dying of hunger, and even obliged to water the garden.

“ He went on, ma'am, worse than that: he said,

“ Of what service are deans, canons, prebendaries, and precentors? The Church of England is composed of bishop, priest, and deacon.

“ I think, ma'am, he counted wrong: there is clerk, sexton, and ringers. We could not do without them: I know nothing about those others; we have done without *them* pretty well, in these parts; and belike they may do as well in others. But to

strip a bishop! There will be nothing in his noble park but nasty bulls and cows. Cook says his haunches are the finest she ever laid hand upon. Twelve hundred a-year indeed! Why, ma'am, what with poor, and gamekeeper, and school, and hot-house, I should not wonder if *we* spend all that here at the Hall. And my lord bishop has four houses to keep up. There is palace, there is London-house, there is Parliament-house, there is Opera-house for the ladies. No, it can't be done, ma'am, nohow; and those who say it can, must be wild, little better than quakers and radicals. Lord help 'em! they don't know how money goes. Ma'am, they begin with the bishops; when they have plucked them, they will pluck us. I should like to know where is the end on't."

"We can stop 'em, Midford, we can stop 'em, take my word for it, be they ever so wilful."

"I don't know, ma'am. My lord bishop told 'squire Eaglethorpe he wished he, being a country

gentleman, a county member, would make a motive about it. 'Squire said,

“ My lord bishop, they are a kennel of wiry-haired hardbitten curs : I have no mind to meddle or make with 'em.

“ Then, said his Lordship, you will see your organ sent to the ale-house ; and your servants will have to sing hymns for it, like the West-phalians.

“ We are next parish, ma'am. Cook, house-keeper, Bess Cockermouth ! sing in church ! and hymns too ! Well, as I hope to be saved, *that* is funny ! Why, they have not a couple of teeth, dog's or double, between all three ! Lord J . . . s ! I ask pardon ! ”

LETTER VI.

Why is the Church of England the only national Church in Europe that is in a minority ? The

question is a startling one: it appears to imply a contradiction in terms. How can it be national unless it comprehends a majority of the people? Really I cannot answer that question. Perhaps it may not be the national Church; it may only be the established one. But nothing of the kind is to be found in any other country; not only in any other where christianity prevails, but mahometanism or paganism. This is very odd, but it is fact. How happens it? Why, it happens because the spiritual wants of the people were insufficiently supplied by the pastors engaged to tend them. Hence the flocks break through the old inclosures, and expose their fronts to the bravest dogs that bark against them. It is impossible to whistle or shout or cudgel them back again.

LETTER VII.

The rate of allowance to the richer bishops seems to be calculated on the quota to be taken away, not on the quota left; on what suits the splendour of the prelate, not on what suits the interest of the church or people of England. We treat them as if we acknowledged that benefices are inheritances; or as if the idle clamour of vested rights had prodigious weight with us. Let us hear no more of this absurdity. A right is a right, and is not to be strengthened by metaphor: a wrong is a wrong, and is not to be defended by prescription. All church property was taken away from those to whom it had been given; and not only was it taken away from them, but transferred to their adversaries and murderers. Shall never a portion of it, never a particle, however small, be detached again from the enormous accretion? Detached did I say? no, not detached from the church at all, stil

less in favour of her opponents; but set apart for useful, needful, established, and ancient purposes; applied to the best uses of the church herself, the education and maintenance of her laborers, the information of the simple, the relief of the needy, the cure of the sick, the comfort of the infirm. This is not destruction, it is not change: it is renovation, it is restoration; it was the Establishment, and, with God's blessing, shall be again.

Does the Church require more luxury than the camp? more state and formality than the quarter-deck? Do we owe more to bishops than to admirals and generals? more to Bloomfield than to Codrington, more to Philpots than to Wolfe? If the services of such men are to be rewarded with such profusion, whig and tory may laugh alike at the paper-lantern of Reform, so ostentatiously extolled.

LETTER VIII.

Forty years ago there were but thirty popish chapels in England.* Last year there were five hundred and ten; twenty or thirty more are rising from their foundations. About an hour since, I passed by one of prodigious size, between Clifton and Bristol. Twenty-five years ago, there was one small room in Bath, by courtesy called a chapel. It might contain fifty persons, leaving but scanty space for the censer to swing about in. There are now about three thousand. In Liverpool and in Manchester, the number of those who are returning to the ancient faith, is proportionally great. How is all this? The English are less liable than most other nations, perhaps than any on earth, to be captivated with musick, with painting, with sculpture, with gesticulations and finery and perfumes. They are not fond of opening their hearts

* Progress of Popery, by the Rev. E. Bickersteth.

in confession: they are not easily wheedled out of their money: they are suspicious if their wives and daughters lend their ears without good security to a priest: they neither grant pardon nor receive it too readily. Bibles have been given to them unsparingly, and tracts for all their necessities: quite in vain! They have turned off their old bakers, and prefer the bread of life in the form of a wafer.

LETTER IX.

When men are most excited, be it in pain or pleasure, they most want sympathy.

There is no Church, and never was there one, in which the ministers of religion have so little intercourse with the people as the English. Sunday is the only day that brings them together, and not in contact. No feelings are interchanged, no sorrows or joys or hopes communicated. Un-

preceded by inquiry or advice, command and denunciation follow the roll-call of the day. It was not so formerly. As much good counsel was given, as much authority was exerted, as serious woes were denounced; but much private conference, much exhortation, followed, and the guilty man saw at once before him his accuser and his pleader.

LETTER X.

During several months which I spent in the principality of Wales, indeed all the autumn, I was chiefly occupied in inquiries relative to the political opinions of the people, in the midst of the changes and innovations which were taking place. I found that these opinions were formed, as they are in Ireland, and as they are wherever the clergy is not quite inoperative, by those of their religious instructors. In every small town, in every village,

I saw a building, often more than one, remarkable for the ugliness of its structure, and announcing by that ugliness its destination. These are the *meeting-houses* of dissenters. I might have saved myself a great deal of trouble and many questions (some of which perplexed and some offended) had I met earlier with a book, afterward given me and diligently perused by me, *An Essay on the Causes which have produced Dissent from the Established Church in the Principality of Wales.*

So important a statement never was laid before the publick in any country of the world. It is written in the calmest spirit that a sense of gross injustice to a nation, would allow, and (as the most respectable gentlemen and clergymen have assured me) not only without exaggeration, but often much within bounds.

No member of administration, no member of parliament, is competent to argue on the subject of the Church, who shall not have perused most carefully every page of this interesting publication.

Among many things which will appear incredible to the people of England, or to any protestant people upon earth, is this, that, *for the last whole century not one individual has ruled a Welsh diocese who possessed the slightest knowledge of the language.*

It appears then that to be a bishop in Wales, it is enough to know english! We always have been aware that to be a bishop in England it is enough to know greek. But they can speak our language also, and do; sometimes even to the people. This is quite out of the question in Wales. Our common-room barons, when they get among the mountains, do not mix with the natives at all, and very little with the national clergy. They leave their pupils in the university, or perhaps in the castle of some ministerial peer, give their benediction in the cathedral and their vote in the House of Lords, and have no worldly care or anxiety until a richer father in God makes way. Then they descend from their perches, look inno-

cent and meek as unfledged doves, waiting with retorted neck and reverted eye for another pea to be pushed into the beak.

LETTER XI.

I know not why bishopricks should be given, as they often are, for merely classical attainments; since, from the moment a scholar becomes a bishop, his study of the classicks and his earnestness in correcting them is over. This grant of episcopalties for greek plays, is like marrying for musick. The marriage-ring cramps the finger of enchantment: adieu frolicsome Rosini! adieu graceful Mozart! adieu divine Beethoven! When the minster throws open its portals, the greek surrenders its charms in favour of the gothick. My lord bishop enters, mounts his throne, and, instead of strophe and antistrophe, hears the re-

sponses sung to the Ten Commandments. Thenceforward

‘What’s Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?’

LETTER XII.

I am no enemy to learning, in bishops, priests, or deacons; but too much may be paid for it, and it may not only be current for more than its value, but forced into currency. In the Church other things are more important. It is strange if any ground is undiscovered along the footpath of our salvation.

Let the clergy, as in ancient times, elect their own bishops. They alone can judge who is fittest to direct them. The business of a prelate is not to examine a classic, but a candidate for orders, and not to scan verses, but to make Christians. St. Paul, learned as he was, probably never heard

of the digamma, and knew just as much about antipastick feet as about the steps of a waltz or quadrille.

The Roman Catholics are certainly in no error, when they attribute to our having a lay head of the Church, the early decay it has fallen into, with a thousand cracks and splittings from foundation to roof. Sir Thomas More foresaw this : and a Protestant has only to look before him to perceive it in all its nakedness. The structure and discipline of every christian church are better than ours, although the tenets of none are equally pure and liberal.

LETTER XIII.

Of all the nations in Europe, the Welsh was for the longest time the most orthodox. Determined as the people had always been against the claims of the papacy, the tenets of the catholic church

were holden with unrelaxing constancy. When the abuses of that establishment grew intolerable she threw down the establishment which would not suffer purification. She will do the same with another, if that other is equally obstinate. I have seen, at different times, a good deal of the Celtick nations. While the Gothick family retains its architype, and appears as if nothing could affect or reach its unity and majesty, it is wonderful how great is the difference in the various tribes of Celts. No two nations in Europe are so utterly dissimilar, in exterior form and internal feelings, as the Welsh and Irish. In fact no two swarms of the same hive are alike. The reason I imagine to be, that some tribes migrated with their wives and others not. These, by necessity, must within few generations lose altogether the distinctive characteristicks of the race. In the Irish we see the fire and vivacity of a southern people: their language, their religion, every thought is full of images. They have ever been, and ever must be, idolaters. Do not

let their good clergy be angry with me for the expression. I mean no harm by it. Firmly do I believe that the Almighty is too merciful and too wise for anger or displeasure at it. Would one of these kind-hearted priests be surly at being taken for another? Certainly not: and quite as certainly the Maker of mankind will graciously accept their gratitude, whether the offering be laid in the temple or on the turf; whether in the enthusiasm of the heart, before a beautiful image, expressing love and benignity, or, without any visible object, in the bleak and desart air.

The Welshman is serious, concentrated and morose; easily offended, not easily appeased; strongly excited by religious zeal; but there is melancholy in the musick of his mind. Cimmerian gloom is hanging stil about his character; and his God is the God of the mountain and the storm.

LETTER XIV.

Prelates sent off fresh after kissing hands, together with apron and wig-box, are more capable of making an impression in any place upon the road, than under the shadows of Snowdon and Plinlymmon. They are looked at with suspicion, not with reverence; and both people and clergy feel with renovated bitterness that they are living in a conquered country.

Surely our clergy should pray in the same language as we do! Surely we have men and brethren not unworthy to lead us to our God! By whose hands were these cathedrals built which strangers occupy? from whose lands arises the wealth that raises them above the descendants of our native princes? Who are they? what are they? And alas! who and what are we?

Such are the indignant thoughts that burst from

an insulted people. They remember from what country sprang the most glorious of British princes; Arthur, the greatest in the dawn of fiction; Cromwell, in the meridian of history.

LETTER XV.

Nothing can be expected to satisfy the Welsh and Irish, unless an Act be carried for the removal from their Sees of all such bishops as are not natives of the two countries, as soon as vacancies can be found for them in England. Tardy is the step, and incomplete the satisfaction. Much more must follow instantly; provision for the poor and for the teachers of the poor; reduction of pay and augmentation of duty in the idle and inefficient; and the abolition of all sinecures and pluralities. When this is done fairly and fully, then people will be at leisure to look into the nature and origin of tythes; will see with precision what was tythed formerly,

what was not ; and will frame their resolutions and render their answer accordingly.

LETTER XVI.

Again and again it has been asked, indignantly, why should bishops be better paid than the heads of the other two professions which depend on government. Even the chancellor of England (to include a third, of which comparatively few members are dependent on the state) even the lord high chancellor of England, until very lately, although he takes precedence of dukes and field-m Marshals, and represents in his sole person the majesty of the laws, received less emolument from the hands of Royalty than the bishop of an abandoned church at the extremity of Wales ! Is there any analogy to this in the rest of Europe ? Are bishops more highly born, I will not say than judges and chancellors, but than admirals and

generals? have they undergone more difficulties? have their limbs been more wasted by vigilance and labour? are they obliged or expected to live more convivially and sumptuously? are they habitually conversant with a class of men to whom splendour is more attractive and imposing? are their uniforms and caparisons more costly?

I have never yet heard a satisfactory answer to any of these questions.

It is now agreed on all hands that the House of Lords is not the proper place for bishops, and that they ought to reside in their dioceses and superintend the conduct of their clergy. Although to live in London is expensive, yet it is chiefly house-rent that is onerous. Whoever has a house of his own, nor inordinately capacious, nor subject to rates and taxes much above a hundred pounds annually, may live copiously and splendidly for fifty pounds a week. Let the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London try whether they cannot maintain five men-servants, six maids, and

a pair of horses on that allowance. If they cannot, let them be assured they are cheated.

There is scarcely a clergyman in the kingdom who has not cried out, or heard his neighbour cry out, *the Church is in danger!* You may put any thing in danger by laying a heap of treasure in it, which only a drowsy old dotard has any interest in guarding. Diminish the quantity of loose gold, place more and better guardians about it, pay them justly and regularly, each according to his activity and vigilance, and you may take your rest fearlessly and soundly.

LETTER XVII.

Military and naval officers will censure my improvidence and injustice, in proposing so large a stipend as fifty pounds a week, perpetually, even to the highest of the clergy; when it is only occasionally, and probably for an extremely small

part of their professional lives, that generals and admirals enjoy so liberal a pay.

My only apology is, my only one can be, that it is better to be munificent where much is taken away; much, it is true, which never should have been allowed, and which was allowed in the beginning as the price or the encouragement of apostasy. Episcopacy may fairly ask a little latitude for her sorrows, on the same plea as Dido,

Dum mea me victam doceat Fortuna dolere.

She likewise had run away with more than belonged to her, and came to an untimely end by it.

LETTER XVIII.

As there are houses, *palaces* they are called, belonging to all the bishopricks, some of which are of great antiquity, and others by no means deficient in the beauties of architecture, it would

be well to keep them in repair from the same funds as the cathedrals. But surely when this is done, one hundred pounds monthly is quite as much as the people of England will be disposed to contribute to the maintenance of a bishop. Wales and Ireland are cheaper countries; a third less is amply sufficient. The livings held in *commendam* should be given to those of their clergy whose lives have been the most exemplary, and whose services the most laborious and of longest continuance. Every thing else, holden by them under the state, ought to be put up to auction. Revoking all grants and leases, simoniacal in spirit, there would be about *fourteen millions* sterling left, out of which there might be established seminaries for the priesthood in the seat of every diocese: and another diocese might be erected at Lancaster, for the manifold wants of that county. It cannot be dissembled, or doubted, that Liverpool must become the most commercial city in the world, within the lifetime of many who are now born. It is al-

ready the great outlet of commerce for the British empire, and within ten years will become the great inlet. Manchester, and many other populous towns in the same county, are filled with dissenters of all denominations. A reformed Episcopacy would correct this evil, for such it appears to the members of the establishment, but we see pretty plainly that an unreformed Episcopacy has produced it. The Church of England can never be again as flourishing and healthy as formerly; but there is some difference between a fine complexion and a gangrene.

LETTER XIX.

I would never live in a country where there are no cathedrals, no organs, no painted windows, no groined arches. Let me live in my own age, with the power of going back to the past and forward

to the future, and possessing all the conveniences that art and imagination can supply.

It is forty years since I saw the cathedral at Saint David's, and I remember, and even feel at this moment, the pang I felt. It happened to be on one of those few days in the year when no wind was stirring there, and when there was something warm and genial in the moisture. Part of the edifice had given way, more was following. Half of the yearly sum which the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Bishop of London deem necessary for the maintenance of their state and dignity, half of that which they and their lackeys consume in three months, would have preserved this noble monument, of ancient art and piety, for three centuries.

Before we were glorious for our poets and philosophers, we were truly glorious for our architects. Greece herself, (for the Romans are mere nullities,) Greece herself would have been overawed at the majesty of our cathedrals. Since the time

of Henry the Seventh we have seen nothing like a great architect among us, until now. But whoever has visited the new building of Saint John's at Cambridge, will acknowledge that now we do see one. It is little to be expected that a man of such abilities should be known to the great and powerful; but, if he should perchance have any interest, and other names do not stand before his, (for this impediment is insuperable,) let us hope that he may be employed, at least in those publick works which foreners are likely to report, and principally in the restoration of our old cathedrals.

Catholicism has hung up in our ancient places of worship the richest heir-looms of Romance. Ungenerously treated at the hands of History, there is much about her that Poetry holds dear; for Poetry is akin to Faith.

LETTER XX.

For my own part, I frankly and explicitly confess that I would rather live under a despotical government which acts systematically right, than under what is pleased to announce itself a liberal government which acts systematically wrong. I believe the happiest and the wisest government in the world, to have been and to be, the prussian. There is less violence in it done to the prejudices of any class or community of men; there is less fraud, less fallacy, less waste of publick money, more discernment in the appointment of all its functionaries, from the highest to the lowest, and more encouragement given to genius, to industry, and to virtue. All the learned men of the most learned nation upon earth, in all its universities, in all departments of its administration (for, strange to say! learned men and men of the most extensive information are admitted even there) did not

divide amongst them so large an income as a Luxmore or a Magendie, successive bishops of Saint Asaph; two personages who could hardly read the testament in Greek, and not at all in Welsh, in which, if they had done their duty, they had to examine young clergymen, who were to read it and expound it in that language. The minerals of one parish, belonging to this diocese, have produced to the bishop in a single year three thousand pounds: the parish is Diserth.

Hæc videbis et feres?

The most exemplary and zealous curate of this place, Mr. George Strong, received from his rector the bishop seventy-five pounds a-year, out of which he established a school at his own expense, to which the bishop refused a subscription of five guineas. He paid another curate for his own parish, where his presence was less necessary for the reformation and instruction of the people, all this sum; and the bishop told him *he* ought to pay more!

LETTER XXI.

The Socinians, and other dissenters from the Church of England, will not be contented with a share granted to their pastors of the good things belonging to Episcopacy. They do not wish their preachers to be made lords in parliament, nor lords anywhere, nor men greatly wealthier than the most industrious and instructed of themselves. It is only so much indulgence thrown away. My firm belief is, that they, and indeed the people of England at large, if they are to have prince-bishops, would just as willingly see in that station what they are used to call Christians, as any other description of persons. Exceptions may be made to this general rule, in favour of some extraordinary men: for example, such as Watson; who, after the experiment of a Dutchman,* showed the world what is the colour of a *flatus ventris* seen passing

* Van Helmont.

through a candle. The transit of Venus is nothing to this; but the natives of Llandaff are among the last to understand its merit. Many of them believed that a deanery was the utmost it deserved, in addition to a couple of professorships worth as many thousands a-year. To me, I must own, it appears to be a thing which should rather be paid from a spiritual fund than a temporal. But there are many, equally able men, who would prove such experiments on lower terms.

Watson had a wonderful facility in finding out and acquiring what would immediately serve his purposes. Beyond this, he had not reading enough to light a pipe with.

LETTER XXII.

We have often heard, and hear stil continually, that bishops, and other dignitaries of the Church, not only in themselves are requisite, but further-

more are requisite in all their splendour, to impose on the minds of men ; and that without this splendour the common people are apt to be deficient in respect to persons of superior worth. How happens it, then, for so it does happen, that there are seven meeting-houses in the parish of Saint Asaph, and none in the next, while in the cathedral itself, with all its attractions and reminiscences, and with a bishop from Christ-Church to boot, you rarely find an audience ?

In fact, I am afraid that hatred and jealousy are the bitter fruits of inordinate wealth ; and that Christianity must repose on something solider than splendour. She once stood erect and fearless on the tempestuous sea ; she slept soundly on the rocks ; and her beauty was not effaced by poverty or stripes or blood. Even when she had joined her hand to the robber and the murderer, and claimed her remnant from the imperial purple, even then there was something in her countenance which induced the nations to be-

lieve that they might invoke her as an intercessor. Sometimes it was not in vain. But she had entered into the unholy league; and it was only in the memory, and in none of the works of men's hands, that her image could be retraced. In the memory that loves and suffers she dwells yet.

LETTER XXIII.

The Welsh are almost as universally estranged from the Church of England as the Scotch and Irish. It is in vain to deny that mismanagement and injustice are the causes of this separation. Benefice after benefice, in their poor country, has been thrown into the smelting-house of all-consuming Episcopacy, which the majority of the Welsh of the present day abominate and detest, as heartily as ever did the covenanters of Scotland; although (for the present) with more forbearance.

In Wales no bishop, even should he be a Welshman, will be considered as a christian pastor, whose revenue exceeds the united income of twenty clergymen, by courtesy called his brethren; but between whom and him there is in reality less brotherhood than between Esau and Jacob. I venture to affirm that, if the sentiments of the people could be collected, they would not willingly allow any bishop in the Principality more than eight hundred pounds a-year, nor any other clergyman less than one hundred. Surely the disproportion is extremely great: it is very much greater than between a captain and a major-general. Something of proportion should be maintained in all the higher grades of society. In no department is it so totally lost sight of, as in the clerical, where the ranks should stand closer, and where the doctrine is, or rather was, that none is more or less than another.

LETTER XXIV.

The abuses of Episcopacy have detached the Church of Scotland from the Church of England; the abuses of Episcopacy have quintupled in one century the Catholics of Ireland; the abuses of Episcopacy have decupled within the same period the dissenters of Wales. Among all the states of Europe, free and despotick, is any thing to be found like this?

Had the prelates of Wales and Ireland been natives, and obliged to residence, as they always should have been, had their stipends been eight hundred a-year instead of many thousands, no envy would have been excited. Their intercourse with their diocese would have been more familiar and more cordial, and they would not have been too high for example. It is idle and false to assert that gentlemen and noblemen would not

educate their sons for the Church, unless in England they might expect more than twelve hundred a year; in Wales more than eight hundred. How few who educate their sons for the army and navy can have a nearer prospect of a larger pay? The one is subject to many contingencies, many risks; the other is uninfluenced by peace or war, unexposed to dangers and diseases, to casualties and climates. And must every man connected with the peerage see a cathedral terminating his avenue? Must every tutor in whose rooms at college a golden tuft has hung, be dissatisfied unless he can puff out his black one to the same dimensions? I have conversed with admirals who served in the navy half a century, and who never complained that five or six hundred a-year was insufficient to maintain them as gentlemen. To be sure there was one good reason; they never had it.

LETTER XXV.

If bishopricks were reduced, in England to twelve hundred a year, in Wales and Ireland to eight, there would be rectories much richer. Hard case indeed ! But are there not some commoners richer than some dukes ? Let the commoner be contented with his riches, the duke with his dukedom. No, but the commoner ought not to be contented with his riches ; he ought to have a *premium* for being rich. We must help him to a peerage, and he may help us to a loan. In this way the destroyers of religion have been also the destroyers of nobility ; and, in every high-road of the kingdom, our old coats are covered with the dust of those who both outstrip and scourge us, and our fleur-de-lis and lions stare us in the face from the panels of a title-trimmed Rascality.

We cannot remove or level all the inequalities of social life ; but we can and ought to remove those

which interrupt the advance of religion and virtue; which render some proud and overbearing, others malignant and intractable! There are said to be pernicious and fatal errors in creeds. As the Church declares it, I may not doubt it. Those errors however, I am confident, do not arise from a spirit of dogmatism, but first are received from a preacher by the wayside, who gains that confidence in the hearer which the Established Church has lost. In few instances would the Church have forfeited this confidence, if pure christianity had been preached with zeal in the places set apart for it by law. All men most willingly ask counsel and consolation from those who (they believe) sympathize with them: now those only can sympathize with them who live among them, speak their language, and know their necessities; more stil, if they are subject to the same. Nothing of this can exist between the prelates in Wales and their poor neighbours. It is only to a prince, or to a nobleman of the first distinction, that the episcopal hand bears

balm. Fenelon, it is true . . . Ah ! but Fenelon was an idolater.

LETTER XXVI.

The clergy, and principally the higher, must be treated like the patients of Doctor Caius in the sweating sickness; they must be kept from going to sleep. Perhaps they may sweat the more for it, but they have a better chance of recovery. And zeal alone will not do: wisdom and patience and complacency must accompany it. Religion must be contented to dwell with the better of our affections, and must accommodate herself in some measure to our habits and modes of life, and among these to our frailties and deficiencies. She may suggest improvements: but even she, with all her authority, cannot force them upon us. Whenever she attempts it, we look coldly upon her, and rather leave our home than retain her for an

inmate. All this may be wrong, but it is in human nature, where many things are wrong.

I must however cease to be a visionary. There is little danger that any sudden and rash improvements will flash upon us from that quarter. It was because no suggestions of any kind were offered, it was because their own language never came to them from the lips of their spiritual leaders, that the Irish and Welsh have seceded; that the two ailes of the English Church have fallen in, and the nave totters.

The present fathers in God are somewhat like the elders who solicited Susanna: the more they admire her purity, the more urgent are they for her favours.

LETTER XXVII.

In ancient times, for nearly five centuries, the pope had little power or authority in Ireland, and

would perhaps have retained none whatever, if papal support were not deemed necessary against protestant usurpation. No tythes at that period were paid to the Irish clergy, who subsisted, as they do at present, on voluntary contributions. There would be a general outcry, at least from one quarter, if any one proposed to reduce the protestant clergy of the same country to the same stalling and provender. Nevertheless there is no country in Europe where both the higher and lower ecclesiasticks enjoy greater authority or greater respect. I would propose no harsh measures, nor even this, which cannot be called a harsh measure, since it belongs to the practice of the country. But if peradventure it should be restored, both in that and in this, I doubt whether it would be followed by any evil consequences. How can we be so wicked as to suppose that the protestant population is less generous or less devout than the popish? in short, to suppose that it would allow its pastors to starve, as we hear they are doing, or

even to want any comfort or convenience, becoming their rank in life and their services to the publick? The reason why a few hundreds of them at present miss their former plenteousness, is, because their rapacity has overstrained them and given them the cramp. A blow always falls harder on the knuckles when the fist is clenched than when it is open.

LETTER XXVIII.

The instruction of the people is the first duty of every government. Religion is the most essential part of instruction; for without it the laws rest upon no solid foundation, nor is human testimony a sure evidence of guilt or innocence. The Church has nothing more to do, within a state, than to apply her seal to moral contracts and engagements. Wherever she does more, she does mischief, and is liable to be thrust out with violence.

Charles the Second, who neither was religious

nor usually had religious men about him, issued a Declaration, by which it was commanded that in all the larger dioceses (for there was no question of the smaller) the bishops should preach regularly and constantly, and should confer no ordinations, and exercise no jurisdiction, without the advice of *presbyters chosen by the Diocese*.

How little of this is observed at the present day, when so much caution is necessary. Did it never occur to Charles, with all his acuteness of remark, that the “presbyters chosen by the Diocese” were not only the most proper men to confer with the bishop and advise him, but likewise to elect him?

Divorce the Church and State : divorce them ; and the one will neither be shrew nor strumpet ; the other neither bulley nor cutpurse.

LETTER XXIX.

A letter of Andrew Marvel, dated November 2, 1665, informs us that the Bill for preventing the increase of the Plague, could not pass, because the Lords could not agree that their private houses, if infected, should be shut up. Would any one, at the present day, refuse to help in shutting up their *private* houses for them if pestilence were within, or care a farthing whether they gave their assent or not? And if their *publick* house is equally or worse infected, shall it not either be purified or closed?

 LETTER XXX.

We have lately been told, by sensible and by liberal men, that we must abstain from all organick changes. For my part, I would abstain from all

changes whatever, were it possible. But smaller, made in time, obviate the necessity of greater.

We must not be led away by words. What! are there no *organick* changes from childhood to manhood? or is it the voice only that is firmer?

LETTER XXXI.

The statute of Edward the Third says, “ Holy Church was founded not only to inform the people of the word of God, but to make hospitalities, alms, and other works of charity.” By one of Richard the Second, the diocesan is commanded to “ set apart in every parish church, according to its value, a certain sum for the poor parishioners, in aid of their living and sustenance for ever.”

Now the King, even without parliament, hath a right, as Head of the Church, to deprive of his diocese every diocesan who happens to have neglected the obligation of this statute. Shall it then

be argued that the Parliament and King together possess no lawful power to deprive a bishop of any portion of his temporal goods, for other and weightier reasons, in addition to these ?

Divinity is little worth having, much less paying for, unless she teaches humanity. The use of religion on earth is to inculcate the moral law ; in other words, in the words of Jesus Christ, to love our neighbour as ourselves. This, in the more obvious sense, is incompatible with our nature : for nobody ever did love his neighbour quite so well as himself, and never will. But we may be taught, and if we cannot be taught we may be obliged, to treat our neighbour as kindly and justly as we expect or desire to be treated by him. This surely is not done by those bishops, who, beside the other vast revenues of their dioceses, hold many rich benefices in them, and many out of them, while clergymen of equal merit, having labored with assiduity in their vocation for half a century, live curates and die paupers.

LETTER XXXII.

The stipends of the clergy are paid out of the land: so are our rents. If government can saddle us of the laity, who possess freeholds, with land-tax, house-tax, and other taxes innumerable, is the same government unable and unauthorized to saddle, with mere race-horse saddles, those who hold land under them, for certain services? And is it unjust or unreasonable to say to them,

“ We have heavy debts, partly contracted in your defence; we cannot pay you in future a higher rate than other laborers who work for us in other fields, and work more hardly, more patiently, more hours in the day, more days in the week, and in what requires more skill and is subject to more danger. However, we will keep you in employment: but since we cannot in justice pay you above what we pay them; therefor, after next Saturday-night, your wages shall be the same.”

Now, what should we think of laborers, who, instead of rendering thanks for such considerate bounty, claimed a gratuity as a freehold, went into the ale-house to form resolutions, got tipsy, and, shouldering and hustling their indulgent masters, cried out *robber!* and *incendiary!* If government has no right to alienate (supposing alienation to be the question) what is usually but most absurdly called church *property*, then no bishop or clergyman in England has any right whatever to an acre of ground, or even to the roof over his head; for these were all taken from the church, and, what is worse, contrary to the intention and stipulation of the donor, and tending to the extinction, instead of the furtherance and promotion, of all those rites and duties for which such substance was devised and granted.

LETTER XXXIII.

An extraordinary case was brought to-day before the mayor of Bristol. A gentleman in black had taken a place in a coach for Bath, had paid his fare, and was putting his foot on the step. Suddenly the coachman of another vehicle came up to him, and, taking off his hat, said civilly,

“ For Gloster, Sir, twenty shillings.”

“ I am going to Bath,” replied the gentleman in black.

“ No matter, Sir, twenty shillings, if you please.”

“ But I am going to Bath, and the fare is much less.”

“ Yon chap’s fare, Sir, may be less than mine : he has not such nags as I have, and a short and easy road he makes of it. But I am a man of few words, Sir ! two are enough between you and me —twenty shillings are good English.”

On some further remonstrance and hesitation, the coachman, strong as he is civil, took by the arm the gentleman in black, and said most obligingly,

“ You may go to Bath and welcome, Sir ; only I don’t drive on that road, and I want nothing from you but the established fare.”

I know not which of the two made the first proposal to go before the chief magistrate of the city ; but they went before him, and there also the loudest complaint was made by the gentleman in black ; the other saying only, sometimes in soliloquy and sometimes to the mayor,

“ He sha’n’t nick me, for all that.”

Having heard both parties with equal impartiality and attention, his worship said to the gentleman in black,

“ My dear Sir, all these people have their lawyers who are ready to show cause against us : you may spend a few hundreds, *or so*, but I sadly fear the *sovereign* must be forthcoming. Mine, I

am sorry to say, is not the surest court to render you any assistance.”

The gentleman in black threw down his money with much indignation, crying, “Bad luck to you !”

“No, no, master ! it has had enough of that already,” said the coachman, making it fly off his thumb-nail, catching it, pocketing it, and wishing the gentleman in black a pleasant journey, and plenty of sport in Bath.

The mayor begged the favour of the applicant’s name, who immediately drew from his pocket an elegant little case of damson-coloured leather, with lyres and cherubs round the border, and opening it, produced so glossy a card that it would almost have deprived of eye-sight a whole family of Persian princes. On this card, in spite of its effulgence, were legible, in such gothick letters as would have rendered an old missal of inestimable price, the words,

The Reverend Barnard Bray,

Regent’s Park.

It appeared that the reverend gentleman, although a native of Ireland, which country had likewise the honour of his education, had been visiting for the first time this benefice of Balamacralogoch.

“ Sir !” said he to the mayor, “ I have been over to see what I can do with ’em. These are ticklish times, and they wince confoundedly. Beside, I wanted to see whether I had any house on my living, or, in case of necessity, any tythe-barn. By-the-by, which do you think is cheapest, common attorney or tythe-proctor? I am afraid they are getting as bad in your country as in ours. For instance, that scoundrel !”

“ Why, indeed, Mr. Bray !” said the mayor, “ he appears to have been a student in your ecclesiastical courts. He will have his money, whether he drives your way or not. The poor catholick must pay for going to see God at Gloster, after he has paid for seeing him nearer home !”

“ My service to you, Sir !” And then at the street-door, “ A bloody hound of a radical as ever swung upon Vinegar-hill !”

LETTER XXXIV.

The injustice done to the Rev. Mr. Barnard Bray, who bears the character of being as respectable a clergyman as any in Ireland, and against whom no single accusation can fairly be laid, excepting non-residence; the flagrant injustice done to this exemplary man, makes me recollect how liberally the well-wishers of the Church have acted in regard to her in Ireland.

Gentlemen, whose genius and powers of reflection will hereafter be duly appreciated in our national councils, have declared in parliament that every village in Ireland, nay, every hovel, in which there is one Protestant, should enjoy the benefit of a protestant clergyman, resident or non-resident.

Had not this been clearly demonstrated in so high a quarter, I should have proposed a scheme apparently less onerous to the hermit of the Reformation. I should have proposed that friendly

communications be made between protestant and catholick gentlemen, with offers to place reciprocally the catholick and protestant tenant in the midst of his coreligionists. Hence there surely would be fewer collisions, less distrust, less danger from competition. Such translocation was carried into effect very extensively, indeed universally, between the Mahometans and Christians, and not merely as tenants but as landholders, in order to terminate the dissensions and insurrections of Greece. Beside, is there no danger, that a stray Protestant be brought within the pale of the old sheepfold, even though he has the blessing of a clergyman of his own persuasion entirely to himself? Men are more apt to fall in with the opinions of such as are of the same condition, than with the opinions of those who are wiser, if above them; and much more so where one teacher is appointed and paid for his business, and another takes him by the hand, and talks to him of charity, fellowship, alb, crosier, and the faith of our

fathers. The Irish, too, are a convivial people, and hate moroseness and diffidence. They are so quick-sighted in what is ridiculous, I am well convinced there would scarcely have been a papist at this time in the country, if we had not been at the pains of shewing them that being a papist was no joke.

LETTER XXXV.

The Bishop of London groaned at an apparition in Ireland: and a horrible one it was indeed. A clergyman was compelled, by the severity of Fortune, or, more christianly speaking, by the wiles and maliciousness of Satan, to see his son work in his garden.

Had the right reverend baron passed my house, early in the morning or late in the evening, the chances are that he would have found me doing the same thing, and oftentimes more unprofitably;

that is, planting trees from which some other will gather the fruit. Would his mitred head have turned giddy to see me on a ladder, pruning or graffing my peaches? I should have been sorry for it, not being used to come down until my work was over, even when visitors no less illustrious than the right reverend baron have called on me. But we have talked together in our relative stations; I above, they below.

LETTER XXXVI.

We must take Episcopacy by the hand, and lead her, before the lamps are out, from the purlieus of King-street to her father's house. There she must be taught that neither lace nor rags become the Spouse of Christ, but a cleanly modest apparel, simple and whole, the work of her own industry. We will give her pin-money; but not enough to render her careless (by having so much at her own

disposal) how soon she is separated from her husband. Let us submit to her inspection a clear account of her property, and what liens are upon it. I find this memorandum between the tape and the parchment. “ In all ages there have been frequent demands made upon the church, and paid by the usufructuary with more or less reluctance. Great portions have been broken down from the old buildings, some of which were wasted, some used for repairs, and some mended the roads.” Here a piece is wanting, and the edges of the paper smell of rats or mice. It continues thus—

“ Upon this the clergy looked for indemnity, by driving off the children, whose spelling and singing they liked no longer ; by foreswearing all knowledge of medicaments, foot-salves, and eye-salves ; by withholding the usual pittance to the poor, and sending them to feed at the farmer’s. After a while, agriculture made great improvements ; minerals too in vast quantities were extracted. And now something more than the firstlings of the

flock, something more than the tenth wheat-sheaf, was demanded. The earth, the rivers, the mighty sea itself, the hiding-places of wealth in the abysses of the globe, were ransacked by the scorers of St. Peter. Human industry, human skill and science, with whatever the animal creation had worked into fertility, or money (drawn from long-past exertions) had fostered and matured, all became subservient and tributary: every thing was censured anew by the more accurate eye, and covered by the purer hand, of clerical Reformation."

LETTER XXXVII.

When I attempt to bring back to my memory all I believe I may recollect of human institutions, I stand in doubt, I turn round, I ask any one who seems to know better than I do, whether there is one, among them all, which has required no im-

provement, no reformation, no revision, in three whole centuries.

Nations are grown conciliating, perhaps indifferent, in regard to tenets, which formerly divided the christian world, and left scarcely any christianity in it. There is however one, against which the protestants are setting their faces.

To take advantage not merely of God's bounty in his earth's fertility, but to be a tracker and a pricker to every quiet nook, every snug form in the whole country; to profit by every invention, every scheme for agricultural improvement, every expenditure that frugality and prudence shall have hazarded; to seize a tenth of herbs and fruits, uncultivated and unknown by the nation, in those ages when a more patriarchal priesthood watched over the labours of the farmer, and oftener relieved them than decimated the produce; to seize upon these things, and more, sometimes with arms, sometimes with laws that suck out all the blood that arms have not spilt. . . this now really, in

theological language, is most damnable transubstantiation.

LETTER XXXVIII.

What! in your zeal for education would you quite overlook religion?

This question is often asked of those who, for the sake chiefly of improving the moral and religious condition of the people, would stop instantly the church's

Luxuriam spoliorem et censum in damna furentem.

Religion is the postulate of education. Is it then necessary to remind a theologian, that there are only four of the commandments of the Old Testament which relate to the works of God: the other six are confined to moral and social duties.

The whole service of the church is education; and surely as much of the matter is to be taught in schools as in churches. If not, why does not

the parson teach as often as the schoolmaster? The time will come when every church in the world will be a school-room.

We have seen that there are four commandments for our conduct upon earth, as social beings, in the Old Testament: there are only two in the New,—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God; and thy neighbour as thyself.

Now we may add another million to the yearly revenue of the priesthood, more easily than one syllable to this ordinance. Let all hear it, early and late, at home and abroad, and (in religion) let them look for nothing else, adding only the authority that supports it.

LETTER XXXIX.

There are few men less amused than I am at listening to gossip; few, I believe, are less disposed to be invidious or personal in their observations.

But unless we mention names occasionally, we shall not be attended to; and unless we make haste, we shall not be in time to arrest the trickery of the bishops. An Act of Parliament was procured, under false pretenses, by a couple of them, Beadon and Lawe, successive diocesans of Bath and Wells, by which the church, of which they were trustees and guardians, was thrown down and robbed. Facts connected with this gagging and violation, were circumstantially brought forward in the *Chronicle* of January the fifteenth, 1836.

The brethren of the two fathers in God are fuming like dung-hills in a frosty morning; but it cannot suspend nor abate the wholesome severity of the season. The Church of England, now really in danger, requires that every Act of Parliament fraudulently obtained, and injuriously applied, and alienating any thing temporarily from her, for private purposes, be immediately annulled. The watchword of every true Conservative is, *The Church is in danger.*

LETTER XL.

Yesterday I was told very gravely, that our country and Ireland would not be in their present state of excitement, could they, under God's providence, be governed by *the great man now no more*.

There are two parties, each of which had his 'great man now no more,' with a mark of admiration at the end of him, and neither of which would acknowledge in the opposite great man any thing better than a pretender. One of them actually brought about all the confusion of which we are hearing such loud complaints; and the other had neither strength nor foresight to prevent it.

Mr. William Pitt was the most wonderful steam-engine that ever worked with human breath; but all that came from it is mingled and lost in air, excepting an insoluble body of national debt, and an

eternal blight upon agricultural labour. Nothing was there of wisdom, nothing of invention, nothing which could stand the test of experience, or could be applied to any purpose but a mischievous one. He was a restless and reckless demagogue, whose sonorous voice and hereditary name raised him above all competitors. Mr. Charles Fox screamed and shrieked at him, and the brighter wit of Sheridan and the solider intellect of Burke were aimed against him ineffectually. He turned his neck, trimmed, and swam onward.

No minister is without a little unctuous material to smoothen any ruffle in his plumage.

The plan of Mr. Charles Fox for utterly abolishing all the power of the Lords, by rendering valid the votes of the Commons in spite of them (after a second refusal of their assent) was unconstitutional and absurd. If similar folly and temerity were not evident in his other projects, it would be impossible not to think him insincere in this. His acuteness lay in detecting the weak

point of an argument, and he was to be depended on only when he replied to fallacies. In debate he was vigilant, strenuous, and expert; and in his deficiencies themselves there was the greater appearance of sincerity. What was incondite was called massy; what required no meditation in his hearers was called unpremeditated. He had no imagination, no love of ornament, or even of order. With men unaccustomed to discipline, promptitude is truth, inconsiderateness is liberality, and haste is heartiness.

Neither of these men could have saved us, nor can any other; we must save ourselves. The current of evil is only to be stemmed by the united weight and breasting of the people.

LETTER XLI.

When I was a member of the university, I remember at Christchurch two gentlemen of the name of Carey: one was called the Dean's Carey; the other had no patronymick. He however was considered as among the best scholars in Oxford, although young, and was remarkable for the simplicity of his manners, the mildness of his disposition, his thoughtful and religious turn of mind, his gentleness and his modesty. The two in fact were not easily mistaken. At the present time, one receives, as bishop of Saint Asaph, what is called only eight thousand pounds a year, but has often been ten thousand; the other, as librarian to the British museum, I know not exactly what, but certainly a good deal less than Crockford and Lord Sefton pay their cooks.

I am not so unconstitutional as to complain of

this : and there could not be a grosser abuse of words than to say it is unprecedented : I only say it is among the many causes which have brought the english church into contempt, and hatred. It is enough, no doubt, that bishopricks are awarded to deserving men : it might create too much confusion to push strait forward to the *most* deserving. Beside, who would take the trouble, and incur the obloquy ? What person of rank and fortune would accept the office of prime minister on such conditions ? fit only for petty regulators and troublesome disciplinarians, like Prussia, &c. I am sorry that it has become my office and duty, in this place, to reprimand my father in God. I will do it as gently as I can. Bishop Carey, serving at the communion-table in his cathedral, passed by a Mrs. Gregson, in order to present the cup first to Lady Mostyn. Her ladyship, I venture to say, was the person most hurt on this occasion. Mrs. Gregson, I hear, and my information comes from a clergyman to whom she related the event, is herself

a dissenter, but having no minister of her own persuasion in the neighbourhood, thought it her duty to join a communion to which she had hitherto been a stranger. No pride was wounded in her, but religion was, and the english church lost a virtuous and pious aspirant. Her inexperience had never been informed that such was really the *étiquette* of the cathedral. Sir Henry Browne was passed over in like manner by Bishop Luxmore, for some fashionable stranger.

Saint Augustin and St. Athanasius would have reproved these two bishops very severely for such misconduct, reminding them that they were only waiters at their Lord's table, although they took upon themselves their Master's title, and that they were bringing the house into discredit. Luxmore indeed they might have ignored; but they would certainly have told the other it was more like the Dean's Carey than Christ's.

We all are growing indifferent from long use; and the few among us who are yet zealots, moderate

our regret as much as may be, that, together with the presence of such holy men as the Saints Athanasius and Augustin, we likewise have lost the benefit of their example.

LETTER XLII.

Sir Robert Inglis, on one occasion, used in parliament the strong expression *incarnation of evil*.

We are accustomed to read the word *incarnation* with somewhat of solemnity and awe, and cannot but be shocked to find it profaned by common parlance, or even employed in composition of the gravest kind, although poetical. But is there a pious or reflecting man in existence, who is not confounded and amazed at seeing the holiest of mysteries stuck so unceremoniously on the horns of the devil?

I hope that Sir Robert Inglis, for the future, when he treats us as children, which in good truth

he has a right to do, will remember that we have tender consciences, and are easily frightened, even when the devil keeps his own ground, and when his horn has its button upon it.

LETTER XLIII.

The Reformation in England was a work of haste, a work of passion. Virtuous men, it is true, in common with wicked men, took advantage of the event, and, being appointed to the vacant churches, acted at once with zeal and moderation. Even those bishops whose motives were base and sordid, and who were ready to slide back again at the first cracking of the ice, deemed it prudent and expedient to look sickly and saintly, and to hood the hawk. Elizabeth forced them to surrender up whatever she wanted of them, under the specious title of exchange; and, being head of the church, she gave her father in God, the Bishop of

Ely, a good round curse for coming in tardily and sciatically to her demands. Episcopal and clerical rapacity were little practised in that reign; a reign otherwise the most profligate, and the most thoroughly persecuting, of any in our annals, and upon which no kindly influence was shed by the two grand luminaries which arose in it, Shakspeare and Bacon, to which it is probable a third of equal or proximate magnitude will vainly be expected so long as the world endures. The lower of the two indeed was not quite free from the grossness and harshness of the age: sad proof to what a degree the human heart may be hardened by the ambition of great power and the exercise of great authority. Had lofty station and inordinate riches been inaccessible and hopeless to him, Bacon would never have crawled and wriggled at the footstool of a vulgar-minded, although shrewd and instructed woman, nor at her bidding have sharpened the axe for the neck of his patron and benefactor. Seeing that wealth and eminence then are capable

of such effects on such a mind, on a man well-born, and habituated from his youth upward to the enjoyment of whatever is plenteous in the household, and polished in society, what is, or rather what is not to be apprehended from them, when spiritual pride works together with so mighty agents, and when unnatural effulgence, which earth and heaven disown, bursts suddenly on the weaker sight of pygmies, who come forth from retirement and obscurity.

Let the spiritual and temporal peers take advantage of the present session, to recover a part at least of their popularity. I have imperfectly heard of a motion intended to be made in the House of Commons, in order to elude the provisions of a beneficent act, passed some time ago, but never yet brought into operation, to prevent the slow death (in the statute not called *murder*) of children in manufactories. The narrator, an honest Tory, was carried so far away by party zeal,

as to attribute the projected motion to a liberal:
I forget the name.

Now fifty acts of parliament in favour of reform are unequal in value to one in favour of humanity.

If any alteration is about to be made in the act, let it be,

First, that in every factory a certain number of square feet be allotted to every operative, as in the slave-ships; but rather more definedly.

Secondly, that no child under eight years of age work more than for three hours consecutively, nor with less than two hours between, nor beyond six hours in the twenty-four.

Thirdly, that between the years of eight and fourteen, no child work longer than three hours and a-half consecutively, nor with less than two hours between, nor beyond seven hours in the twenty-four.

Fourthly, that between fourteen and twenty,

none work longer than four hours consecutively, nor beyond eight hours in the twenty-four.

The race of Englishmen is not to be deteriorated, and worn gradually away, by the base cupidity of wretches unworthy to be called Englishmen or men. Whoever contravenes the law projected above, should be subject to hard labour for fourteen years. Surely were it possible that any monster in man's dress should attempt to annul the provisions of the most beneficent act (however defective) passed by Parliament within our memory, there would be an instantaneous vote for his expulsion from the House, and declaring his incapacity to serve any office, military or civil. The law for the abolition of the slave-trade in the West Indies, is far less important than a law for the abolition of a worse at home. Never can I believe any Englishman capable of such atrocity as this party-man announced, to ridicule and abuse (no doubt) the name of liberal. Should any thing so fraudulent as well as inhuman be attempted, I

hope the police will take precautions lest the people in their indignation violate the laws; even should it be only an exposure of the criminal for a few hours in the pillory, under the slightest whipping that ever belayed the shoulders of malefactor.

On such an occasion as this, it becomes the peers, temporal and spiritual, to step forward in all their power and authority: and perhaps the royal hand itself would be extended, to close or dissolve an assembly, in which any thing were received and countenanced so derogatory to the dignity, so revolting to the humanity, of the nation.

LETTER XLIV.

If those clergymen who talk of great prizes in the church, as the sole or principal motive to enter it professionally, were at all conscious of the unchristian spirit evinced by such avowal, they would

cancel the unhappy quotation. Few of them perhaps are aware that Doctor Bentley was the broacher of the doctrine, than whom never was man more disingenuous, more litigious, or more rapacious. It is better to imitate his perseverance than his pertinacity, and it is easier to admire his scholarship than his christianity. His spirit in both was alike: it was sordid, fierce, and intolerant.

In the amassing and carrying forth of learned works, ore, pig, and bar, there was indeed a snorting, kicking, and biting, but there was likewise (since we are not bidding for him let us own it) a most able beast to the dray.

If there was any thing that equalled the sagacity of Bentley in the detection of a bad reading, it was his ingenuity in substituting a worse. But, if learning is enough, he alone will make that man learned who studies his writings attentively. However, let young clergymen regard him rather as the successor of Joseph Scaliger and Isaac Casaubon,

than as the interpreter of Christ and his apostols ; in whose books the word *prize* will be found in a very different context, and bearing a very different sense. I hope they will benefit by this remark : I hope it will satisfy them : for it would be inconvenient to me to give a course of lectures in theology, before them and the Heads of Houses. Beside, I do not know whether I am qualified by the Statutes. Let me assure them, ere we part, that vast incomes will render them neither more contented nor more respected. I have seen, in the Roman and Neapolitan states, bishops who derived from their dioceses but five or six hundred pounds a-year, and were obliged as well as disposed to give away much in alms, and to divide the remainder with their subordinate clergy, many of whom, under various denominations, resided in the palace. I have seen nobles, men and women, kneeling in the street before these bishops, when no ceremony of the catholick church was being performed.

I have seen lately, in the Principality of Wales,

a far more respectable race of men, artisans and farmers, walking bare-headed by the side of their preacher, yet joining with him in cheerful conversation. I have never seen in that country, or in this, the same respect paid to wealthy bishops; but I have seen them shunned, I have seen them derided, and I have heard them curst. After all, will any dare to say that they are immoral men? . . . otherwise indeed than in demanding a great deal more for their services than they are conscious such services merit. This appeal of mine in their favour is, I acknowledge, an unworthily weak one: for what can be more immoral than such injustice, arrogance, and rapacity? But it has been said that it is not for their services as bishops, such wealth is thrown into their aprons: that the bishopricks themselves were given them for classical attainments. Sorry am I for so inconsiderate a declaration. We happen to live in an age when literary labour is well-paid; not that the best is

paid most ; there being few indecorously ravenous for its higher luxuries, but nearly all sitting down with a tolerably good appetite for homely fare, and capable of digesting a pretty large quantity, with merely a sprinkling of such spices as are more customary than costly, and come from our own plantations. Unquestionably those who enjoy rich benefices have attained them after much industry : yet they do not seem to me worn out by it, or incapable of more. There is nothing in which the intellectual and physical vary so widely as in the proofs of strength. To have undergone great labour is indeed a proof of it in the physical : in the intellectual, to have performed what may appear most laborious, is none. High intellects always act, but never labor : to say that they work or rest from their work, is applying to them a metaphor picked up from the ordinary walks of life.

The revenues of St. Asaph, in the time of Luxmore, were worth at least twelve thousand a year ;

and the parishes belonging to his relatives were worth at least fifteen thousand a year. His family stil possesses, in church-property, in the dioceses of St. Asaph and Hereford, ten thousand seven hundred and seventy-six pounds a year !

The French Revolution is said to have been chiefly brought about by the profusion of the Court. What was the profusion of the French Court in comparison with this? And was Bishop Luxmore at all remarkable, or ever heard of, for piety, for zeal, for genius, or for learning? Here however is a family in possession of *twenty-seven thousand pounds a year*, arising from the English Church. A larger sum than was enjoyed, at the same epoch, by all the admirals and commanders who fought under Nelson, and saved our country. The amount of a *half-year's* income of this princely revenue has not been distributed among all the poets and historians and philosophers of England since the invasion of Julius Cæsar. Our king himself, for more than fifty years, was contented with

much less than one quarter of it. Even a single pound, of these many thousands, ought never to have been bestowed in the Church on strangers to the nation and the language. The heaviest complaint against the Norman conqueror (who gave reason, God knows, for many) was about the intrusive prelates. The people of Wales, I conceive, have just as much right and reason to drive out bishops and clergy (forcibly pushed in among them) who speak only in an unknown tongue to them, as the English had to do the same, for the same cause, three centuries ago. These very bishops and clergy praise the zeal and piety of those who performed the exploit. Such an abuse ought not to be tolerated one Sunday more. To prevent all violence, which sooner or later must explode against the most fraudulent and oppressive usurpation, eject the present Welsh bishops . . . bishops of Wales I should have said . . . eject them instantly, giving them the first benefices that fall under the Crown, and providing that neither now

nor hereafter they receive less than eight hundred a year, although unserviceable.

Let us come to matter-of-fact. In this age of bibliopoly, would any company, of the most speculating and enterprizing publishers, take all the bishops together, and give them each fifteen-pence aday for the cleverest things they could produce? No, by the shades of South-Sea and Mississippi!

LETTER XLV.

There may be some so inconsiderate, or so indifferent to truth and evidence, as to accuse me of hostility to the Church of England. Is there a single word in the whole of these Letters, which does not tend manifestly both to its purity and its preservation? Religion is good and needful, were it only for the sociability it brings about. Too true is it that, being bound up with the state, this

effect has not only been neutralized, but one contrary to it has been produced. Nobody, I hope, will suspect me of a tendency to either of the opposite sects, calvinism or popery. If I must swear on the occasion, I will swear by my own book. I see then, in calvinism, a contracted, sordid, tallow-lighted theater, exhibiting a drama in which only two actors figure; and these change dresses and characters upon the stage. Englishmen, who love fair play and plain dealing, hardly can approve, one would think, of a Devil who has the assurance to make it appear (which, to give him his due, he does) that he is more just and merciful than his antagonist. The rogue! I have not patience with him.

And now let me not only calm my own displeasure, but reason a little with those grave people who can see only a *Fool's Paradise* in Popery. Do not let them be made angrier, by putting their hands in their pockets and discovering that a trifle has been abducted at the door.

There are many good things, and pleasant ones, in Popery. It is pity that young ladies are asked some odd questions, so early in life, and rather by a strange gentleman than by mama. But this is quite requisite to the existence of the system, and they soon like it. What I most admire is the modesty of the clergy: of course I do not mean exactly in the instance above-cited; I mean in their claims to the antiquity of the worship. Surely, if they would glory in its antiquity, they are modest men indeed, in taking their stand so low. Their fishermen did not punt it first on the little sea of Galilee: no, they drew the seine and sang to the dolphins on the blue Egean.

Their first bishop on record was not Simon-Peter, but Homer.

I applaud them for abstaining, so much as they have done, from making fresh inclosures. But it must be confessed that they have been occasionally a little too severe with the poachers on their lordships. However they have kept open house, have

treated their guests nobly, and, what is better than all, have been indulgent to the afflicted and the poor.

LETTER XLVI.

There is not much to recapitulate in the series of these letters: a few axioms may follow them.

1. The same causes produce the same effects.
2. A descending body falls more and more rapidly.
3. It is better to have an instrument efficient in doing good, than one efficient in doing evil.
4. It is better to have it operative than inoperative.
5. It is better to have fifty than one, if we have room and work for the fifty.
6. It is better, if it can be done to the content of the fifty, to pay among them all no more than had been paid to one.

Whoever will take the trouble to calculate, may

find how many would remain in the Church of England *seventy* years hence, were dissent to encrease in the same proportion as within the last *seven*, or say *fourteen*. Now if the same causes produce the same effects, and if we allow them to continue, we shall perceive that about one in four throughout the United Kingdom will be of the Establishment at the close of seventy years. Of course, long before that period, the Dissidents must overthrow it. Consider now whether it is better to see it overthrown than corrected: consider whether many great and excellent things have not fallen into ruin by permitting only (what appeared) a brief procrastination. Some are of opinion that the Church of England, at the present hour, does not embrace half the inhabitants of the United Kingdom. In that case it would be just and lawful at any time, with consent of Parliament, to subvert it utterly. Should it not be the case, it soon must be. Would it not be such a miscalculation as no gamester ever was accused of, were the dis-

tributers of the national wealth and offices to resolve on holding in their hands, rather than lay on the table, the winning card? Their children and friends may enjoy the station of bishops with much respectability and dignity; but never in future with papal display. and oriental splendour. They may continue to be as wealthy and elevated as the prelates of other countries, or as the governors of cities, or even of provinces: but they must not stand above most princes of the continent, and (higher than any of them) above those Englishmen who, concentrating the might and majesty of the nation, strike down on our subject sea the audacity of kings and emperors.

LETTER XLVII.

Here have I been occupied in planting a live fence round the venerable ruins of the english

church, which had suffered much under the waste and negligence of the lord of the manor, much from passers-by, but infinitely more from the tenants. I trust I have rendered the greatest services that ever man yet rendered to the bishops, who perhaps may owe their very existence to me, and certainly will owe, if my advice is taken, what is next to existence, the love of all around them, and dignity and authority. Each should become a chancellor; each should become a judge without appeal in all ecclesiastical matters relating to his diocese; each should possess the power of convoking his clergy, and of holding a court on any member who had neglected or transgressed his duties, with power not only of suspension, but of removing from holy orders. All other convocations can only be for factious and seditious purposes, since it cannot be supposed that Parliament will ever be less attentive to a representation laid before it by the clergy, than by any other profession, any other section of the community.

And now I most solemnly protest, that, living as I do in an age which (in England) may be called the *age of statues*, I have written without the slightest expectation that for these, the most important of my labours, one should be erected to me by a publick vote in either of our Universities. The uttermost I look forward to, is, that some grateful bishop, when he reads of my death in his *Times*, will order a plaister cast to be taken of me, to be placed over the door of his dining-room.

END.

Page 7, line 13, *for phagendemick, read phagedenick.*
8, — 13, *after them insert annually.*

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